Speak English With Vanessa

Free PDF Worksheet

Real English Conversation: Parenting

Dear English Learner,

Get ready to speak confidently! I recommend reading the worksheet out loud and using the blank space on the last page to answer my challenge question. Click here to watch the original video. Thanks so much for learning English with me!

Your teacher,
Vanessa

Parenting

What has it been like having 3 kids so far?

1. Unheard of: *something really unusual or impossible*
   Sleeping through the night is **unheard of** for a baby.
   It's **unheard of** to speak English fluently after studying for only one week.

2. To tend to someone: *to take care of the needs of a person*
   Who do I **tend to** now?
   My sister **tends to** our grandmother because they live in the same town.

3. To take a step back: *to stop doing something or being involved in something*
   Sometimes you have **to take a step back**.
   I was so busy that I decided **to take a step back** from volunteering so that I could spend more time with my family.

4. Intangible: *something that cannot be physically held or measured*
   The reward for taking care of children is **intangible**.
   Being able to spend so much time with my family is an **intangible** benefit of my job.

How do you handle competition between siblings?

5. To hold back: *to hesitate to speak or act*
   They were not **holding back** with their questions.
   We **hold back** on helping our kids with everything, because they need to learn how to do things for themselves.

6. By nature: *a naturally occurring characteristic*
   By nature, the prize in a family is the parent's attention.
   By nature, I am a more straightforward person and my sister is more reserved.

7. The squeaky wheel: *with people, it means that a person who complains or causes problems is more likely to get attention than someone who doesn't*
   My brother was **the squeaky wheel** of the family.
   She was a great employee, but because her co-worker was a **squeaky wheel**, no one noticed her accomplishments.

8. Headstrong: *someone who wants to do things their own way*
   Freddie is more **headstrong** than I was.
   Being **headstrong** isn't always a bad trait, but you need to know how to get along with other people.

9. To get/be glossed over: *to overlook or ignore something or someone*
   By default, the middle child **gets glossed over**.
   When we were buying our house, they **glossed over** the fact that the roof needed to be replaced.

10. To dread: *to be afraid or uneasy about something*
    Some people **dread** going to family gatherings.
    I **dread** shopping during the holiday season, so I try to purchase all my gifts throughout the year.

11. To mellow out: *to calm down and relax*
    We've **mellowed out** with age.
    She was really nervous about going to the party, but once she started talking to people, she **mellowed out** and had fun.

12. To be touchy: *to be oversensitive and irritable*
    Theo isn't **touchy** about things Freddie says.
    Politics are a **touchy** subject, so I try to not bring them up in conversation.

The challenge of raising (or parenting) children at a time when technology ends up taking over the parents' role. Are tech devices dumbing down our children?

13. Starting them young: *to begin doing something when a child is young*
    Starting them young is not the best idea.
    We take our kids on hikes as often as we can–we are **starting them young** so that they love and appreciate nature.

14. Set: (adjective) *a particular time and place*
    We have a **set** time of day to watch TV.
    I like to have a **set** schedule for my day because it helps me stay focused and get work done.

15. The elephant in the room: *an obvious problem or difficult situation that people don't want to talk about because it makes them uncomfortable*
    The elephant in the room is phones.
    When she was arrested for drunk driving, it became **the elephant in the room** when she showed up at parties.

16. Peers: *someone your own age, level, or experience*
    I think it will be tricky when their **peers** have phones.
    When I need an opinion on something, I like to ask my **peers**.

17. Like-minded: *someone who has similar values, interests, or priorities*
    It's easier when you have **like-minded** friends.
    She and I have different personalities, but we have been friends for over twenty years because we are **like-minded**.

How do you and Dan usually manage the housework and childcare? How did you decide which of you will take care of what?

18. **Could you** wash the dishes?
    I will do the dishes **for you**.
    Don't worry. **I got it.**

19. Asterisk: to indicate that there is a limiting fact or consideration for something
    There was a little **asterisk** that we put on these rules.
    We put ourselves on a budget, but there was an **asterisk** for supporting organizations or causes that we really care about.

20. To barge in on someone: *to come into a room without warning or knocking first*
    You can go to the bathroom without a child **barging in on** you.
    I was in the middle of an important meeting when he **barged in** and started asking questions.

21. To be cut and dry: *when something is clear and simple, settled and decided*
    Delegating chores is a lot more **cut and dry** for other couples.
    The election is not as **cut and dry** as everyone thinks it is.

Bonus: *How is Dan feeling going back to work after helping you to teach us English for a long time?*

22. To be at each other's throats: *when people are disagreeing and arguing*
    We weren't **at each other's throats**, but the change has been good.
    No one was surprised to learn that they broke up–they were constantly **at each other's throats**.

Vanessa's Challenge Question

Use the space below to write a few sentences about this prompt. **Tell me about your parent or parents. How are you similar or different from them?** Use at least 2 phrases from this lesson in your answer.

Sample answer: *When I was a child, I was very headstrong–I still am! If I strongly believe in something, I speak up or take action. My mother is more shy, so she usually holds back her opinion , and my father is very mellowed out, so he doesn't get bothered by things easily. As I have gotten older, I have learned to listen and communicate with others better, but I am not quite mellowed out yet.*

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